



# RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Committee meeting held on  
Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2021 at 19.00hrs in the Town Hall, 1 High Street,  
Cullompton, EX15 1AB

## Present

**Chair:** Councillor J Buczkowski

**Committee Members:** Councillors: M Beckwith, M Dale and C Snow

## In Attendance:

**Officers** J Norris (Town Clerk)

## 2 Members of the public

### R 1. Chair's Announcements

The Chair made a statement as follows:<sup>1</sup>

I have no announcements to make this evening but I am going to address a concern that has been raised by members of the public, Committee members and is one that I share.

Pre COVID it was the usual custom and practice of the Town Council to issue supporting documents and reports to both full Council and Committee meetings at the same time as the summons and agenda. It should be noted it was rarely left to the minimum amount of time allowed by legislation to issue these. This policy on supporting documents was ratified by full Council with eth resolution it made on 23 August 2018 in that it was resolved that all reports to either full Council or Committees are written and distributed with the meeting agenda and posted with the agenda onto the Town Council's website. In exceptional circumstances the Chair may authorise a late distribution in which case they will be added to the agenda on the Town Council website to enable full visibility and transparency. This did slip somewhat in the era of remote meetings perhaps understandably given the challenges that we were facing. During the last 18 months concerns have been raised on a number of occasions but the situation was accepted as a temporary necessity. Now that we are back to the standard format of meetings with of course the so called hybrid element of allowing members of the public to participate remotely and work patterns are slowly returning to normal it was expected that the distribution of documents would return to the previous usual practice, sadly it has not on this occasion. I must say that it is unacceptable for all of the documents to be issued 48 hours before a meeting and I will state that I was not consulted, forewarned nor informed f the reasons for lateness. While I acknowledge that the Town Clerk is correct with the assertion that there is no legal reason why documents or reports cannot be tabled at a meeting it must be acknowledged that is not best practice and there are very sound moral and practical reasons not to do this along with the very clear direction of full Council on this matter and the precedent set by the town Council's usual historical practice. All Councillors are volunteers and as far as I am aware all Councillors quite

---

<sup>1</sup>Chairman's statement included verbatim as per Minute R24 Resources Committee held 12 August 2021

rightly want to make sound decisions based on information presented to them in the supporting papers, indeed they have a duty to the people they represent to be fully informed; it is grossly unfair to routinely put Councillors into a position here they have to speed read documents and absorb large amounts of information in such a short period, potentially to the detriment of their other commitments. It should not need stating but if the Town Clerk wishes to change the Town Council policy or indeed its usual practice or challenge the previous resolution that was made then Town Council should be asked to consider the matter and make a democratic decision rather than an arbitrary decision being imposed by the Clerk onto Councillors and members of the public, I, certainly have not had the opportunity to read the incomplete supporting papers that were released at 5.25pm and 8.00pm on Tuesday evening and therefore I am unable to take a meaningful part in this meeting nor do I feel sufficiently informed to make sound decisions, therefore I am going to propose from the Chair that all items except public participation are deferred. If this proposal is duly seconded and then passed I as Chairman will call a meeting of the Committee in accordance with Standing Order 6C to be held on Friday 16 July 2021 at 7.00pm to deal with the deferred matters.

**RESOLVED** that all agenda items except public participation are deferred

## **R 2. Public Participation**

This agenda item enables members of the public present at the meeting to raise matters which are relevant to the work of the Committee.

### **Speaker 1**

Over the last weeks and months the speaker has raised concerns about the failure to publish documents on-line; the documents are important so that the public can make comment and ask questions and failure to provide is a serious interruption of rights.

The Speaker is awaiting for replies to emails including a request made under AGAR rules which has not been acknowledged and has put in place means to address items that are being put on the back-burner.

The Speaker is still waiting for an apology and this is his third request for it.

The Chair responded that the comments about publication of documents would be taken on board. The Chair said that if the Speaker lets him know the date and subject of the emails he will follow that up and similarly if there are any issues that the Speaker has raised but not received a response if the Speaker could let the Chair know the subject it will be followed up. In terms of an apology if the Speaker can let the Chair know specifically what that is about the Chair will provide a more in-depth response.

The meeting closed at 19:13hrs